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NUGÆ ECCLESIASTICÆ  
by  
Moses Peerie D.D.





In memory of  
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76

✓

[ actually by  
R. H. Story  
and others ]

Halter William Coats.

1871

## THIS SEASON'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

---

### *IN THE PRESS.*

KNEADED DOUGH, FOR NEEDY DUFFERS. By  
NEDDY BAXTER.

DE PULICE CELTICO; or, LEES ON FLEAS. A  
CHAPTER OF HIGHLAND ENTOMOLOGY.

HOW THE LORD LED ME; or, THROUGH LONELY  
LANDS, WITH THE G.-G. By DR HAMISH.

A TAIL-LESS TALE; or, THE OLD, OLD STORY. By  
R. H. S.

ON THE POT OF MANNA, AND ALL MANNER  
OF POTS. By VISCOUNT POTTERER.

BAD SECONDS. By the EDITOR OF THE MINUTES OF  
THE WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY.

WANDERING SHEEP AND LIMPING COLLIES.  
By the CONVENER OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY'S COMMITTEE ON  
ADMISSION OF MINISTERS OF OTHER CHURCHES.

# NUGÆ ECCLESIASTICÆ



Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit.

Eheu ! quanto minus est cum reliquis versari  
Quam tui meminisse:

NUGÆ ECCLESIASTICÆ:

*Fragments,*

DRAMATIC AND LYRICAL,

*FROM THE UNPUBLISHED PAPERS*

OF THE LATE

MOSES PEERIE, D.D. (GLASGUEN.)

MINISTER OF THE UNITED PARISHES OF  
BENSTAGGERS AND GLENSTODGIE.

EDITED BY

JABEZ GILEAD.

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS

EDINBURGH AND LONDON

MDCCLXXXIV



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## FRAGMENTS: DRAMATIC AND LYRICAL.

---

IN writing these few words of preface, I discharge a duty imposed on me by the last wishes of a dear friend; and I do it readily, because of the love I bore him. Moses Peerie was one of those men whom their friends feel to have been greater and better than the world suspected; a man of a large, liberal, sympathetic nature—encumbered, though not absolutely restrained or hidden, by a silent and reserved manner. Those who were really intimate with him—and of the few I was one—could not but love and honour him for his good heart, his strong clear head, his quaint and lambent humour. That humour, satirical, yet never malicious, played round his conversation, illumined his correspondence—sometimes even irradiated his sermons.

“I know I have said and written some amusing things,” he once observed to me, during an illness;



"but the big world, if they were repeated, would never recognise them, for humour must deal with what is round it; and it is a small world that has been round me all my days. I think people—British people at least,"—he continued, "are getting what I may call metropolitanly provincial. They either take, or pretend to take, no interest in anything that does not hail from 'town,' as they call it, meaning London, as if there was no other town in creation. They are losing their taste for the picturesque life and ways of the country, the towns, the provinces, and are enveloping all in the rather vulgar mantle of that great Cockney province of London." "Yet," said I, "many in Scotland, dear friend, have laughed over some of your verses, and many more would do so, I believe, if you published them; for we still, in Scotland, preserve some at least of our national interest, and indulge in our local jokes." He made no reply at the time; but, in arranging his papers after his death, I lighted on a little packet with the following note enclosed: "I leave these papers to my dear and trusted friend, Jabez Gilead, of The Balms, with this direction—that he shall cause to be published, in a small volume, and at a reasonable price, the pieces therein contained. The verses entitled 'Portraits in Pitch' I do not wish him to publish. He may, if he pleases, give a few, but only a few, specimens of their substance and style, by way of prelude to the others." In execution of this



desire I have arranged the present volume, prefixing to the several pieces such notes, in elucidation of their scope and aim, as seemed advisable.

I have felt a difficulty in interpreting my friend's words about the 'Portraits in Pitch'; and, upon the whole, have concluded that I perhaps carried out his intention best, by embodying the following piece, with its accompanying extracts, in this preface. In doing so, I may premise that by the title 'Portraits in Pitch,' Dr Peerie meant a series of etchings of ecclesiastical characters and incidents, which I believe he threw off from time to time, as the fancy struck him. I rather think that in this he sometimes engaged, in a waggish way, the aid of one or two of his friends, or embodied scraps contributed by their pens. I infer this from the fact that, appended to a few of the little stanzas which compose the work, I find what appear to me to be the initials of these gentlemen—as, for instance, "A. K.," "H. S.," "G. S. B." Those without any initials I take to be his own; and in fact I have good reason to believe that the whole underwent his revision, so that parts contributed by others were yet welded into a poetic unity by the final touches of one controlling hand. Scottish readers—and for these this volume is specially prepared—will have little trouble in identifying the originals of most of the pictures; though—in case of giving any cause of offence—I do not insert their names with the careless and good-natured freedom which always

characterised the sportive writings of my lamented friend.

I have acted on the conviction that my simplest plan here, both as fixing those extracts which he would have himself selected, and as giving a new illustration of his peculiar humour, is to insert this notice of the 'Portraits in Pitch,' which proceeded from his own pen, and appeared in an influential newspaper to which he was a contributor. It was thus he excerpted from and commented upon his own work:—

‘PORTRAITS IN PITCH.’

(*For private circulation.*)

An odd-looking *brochure* with this odd title has been forwarded to us, from a most respectable quarter, with a note quite as odd as the title, requesting the favour of “an early notice.” It is not usual for us to notice volumes, however small, which bear on their title-page the announcement that they are intended for “private circulation”; but, on the other hand, we have a great dislike to accept copies of works presented to us in our capacity of critics, and to refuse them the rights of criticism. After a good deal of deliberation, we have in the present case decided to take public notice of the work submitted to us; and we regret that our decision lays us under the obligation to speak with some firmness and frank-

ness of animadversion. As a general rule we do not much care for caricature and satirical portraiture, and are disposed to echo Mr Carlyle's sentiment that "sarcasm is the direct language of the devil." From Aristophanes to Mr Thackeray, satirists, however witty and caustic, touch a chord in our bosoms which vibrates too sharply in unison with our "old Adam" to make (to us at least) a "mellow music." Satire, if not exactly "rejoicing in iniquity," yet can hardly be described as, along with Charity, "rejoicing in the truth"; and is more apt to chuckle maliciously over the exposure of a fault than to shed the lustre of a heavenly smile (*lampeggiar del angelico riso*) over the discovery of a virtue. We therefore cannot say that we have perused this slight production with a lively sympathy; for its tone is essentially and obtrusively satirical. In point of fact, it is a Satire. And what is worse, it may be said to be a kind of ecclesiastical Satire. Nor is this all: it deals with several highly respected ecclesiastics, in a way that we cannot but think unbecoming and disrespectful.

We remember a story of Dr Guthrie's about a man who, during one of his (or some other joker's) most humorous discourses, was sitting as grave as Rhadamanthus, and on being asked why he did not laugh, responded that he "did not belong to the parish." The 'Portraits in Pitch' contain a good deal of humour that, we suspect, will be to others—

as to ourselves—inadequately amusing, because we “do not belong to the parish.” We are not sufficiently acquainted with the *personnel* and the professional peculiarities of the several subjects, to see always the point of the joke.

The idea of the work has evidently been suggested by that volume of “nonsense verses” which, published a few years ago, was vastly popular for a time, and set every one to catch and string together absurd rhymes, in the most illogical sequence. The theme in the verses before us is—speaking generally—the clergy and elders of the National Church, or rather such of them as are best known in general society, or in the General Assembly. The first verse, intended to describe that venerable Court, may be said to be *instar omnium*, and to strike the key-note of the whole set. The same spirit and tone of irreverence and playfully spiteful disrespect infects them all. It runs thus:—

“There was a right reverend body  
That was said to be fond of its toddy:  
When it met once a-year  
Its proceedings were queer,  
And seemed as inspired by Tom Noddy.”

No well-regulated mind can approve of sentiments like these. The Assembly may have its defects; but a friendly hand would not depict them thus. The treatment of individuals is not more decorous than that of the Assembly at large. Some of the por-

traitures, indeed, we cannot too strongly condemn. It is simply revolting to us to observe the epithets applied to such men—pillars of the Church and bulwarks of the faith—as Dr C—m—ng of S—dyf—d and Dr Ch—rter—s of Edinburgh. When we have mentioned that this last eminent scholar and divine is named in a tone of levity as “the biblical critical Ch—rter—s,” we have said enough to indicate the grounds, both poetic and moral, of our condemnation. While satiric criticism and description is freely addressed to the several persons dealt with, we fancy there is a friendlier touch when the brush is laying the “pitch” upon the features of a Broad-Churchman. While, for example, the “leader of the General Assembly” is referred to as follows:—

“There was a bold parson called Phin,  
Whom some thought the real man of sin ;  
When he enters the chair  
How the Broad Church will swear,  
But that will not ruffle his skin ;”

a group, whom we fancy we commit no solecism in designating members of the “Broad” party, are thus more amiably limned:—

“There was a dark preacher called Caird,  
Suspected by great Jimsie Baird,  
Because his belief  
Seemed abnormally brief—  
Yet he lived to be Principal Caird.

There was a good Christian called Burns,  
 Who was parson and sportsman by turns,  
     Either text, rod, or gun  
     He could handle like fun,  
 This regular brick of a Burns.

There was a keen party called Story,  
 Whose hymns were sanguineous and gory ;  
     Mactattle he flayed,  
     And Humming he made  
 To bless the cognomen of Story."

Though we don't identify M'Tattle, as he has been named, we may as well quote the stanza relating to him :—

"There was a fat monster, M'Tattle,  
 A stalled ox among the black cattle,  
     In his ablest discourses  
     There never more force is  
 Than in an unweaned babe's prattle."

We do not deny that some, nay many, of the verses possess considerable merit—a rather quaint knack in rhyme, a graceless audacity of satire, and a happy adroitness of epithet—of which we think our readers may possibly like to judge for themselves ; so we make some extracts—entering whatever protest may be thought proper against the gibing and sacrilegious spirit that here and there asserts its presence :—

"There was a tall priest called M'Leod,  
 Of his altar and font justly proud ;  
     But the sophists of Dunse  
     Were upon him at once,  
 And shut up this Popish M'Leod.

There was a divine by name Boyd,  
As true as the best aneroid,  
Who wrote prose and verse  
In style clear, but not terse—  
And gave pleasure to men unalloyed.

There was a gay prophet, MacDuff,  
Who threw up his charge in a huff;  
And now at his scribbling  
He ever is dribbling,  
This bottomless pit of MacDuff.

There was a sweet poet named Shairp,  
Who played on the bagpipe and hairp;  
When they asked 'Hoo are you?'  
He replied 'No that fou'—  
This really vernacular Shairp.

There was a grim fanatic, Niven,  
To whom but one talent was given;  
But with this little trust  
He kicked up such a dust,  
That a halter was purchased for Niven.

There was a coarse howler called Hutton,  
Who of virulent slang was a glutton;  
When he yelled at the Church  
She sat calm on her perch,  
And the public cared never a button.

There was a smart shaver called Smith,  
Who said Moses was merely a myth,—  
But a Synod of Frees  
Gave this sceptic a squeeze,  
Which seemed to diminish his pith."

But really we must not go farther. We are not  
sure that we should have gone so far. There are

one or two wholly irrelevant verses, the object of which we do not quite perceive, unless it be that the mind of the reader, wearied, possibly, by the monotony of satire, should have a neutral ground provided for momentary repose—a kind of “Rest and be thankful.” The *motif* in these cases seems to be merely some ordinary proverb or street catchword—as, for example :—

“There was an historical donkey,  
That belonged to a cove they called Conkey,  
Who said ‘Twopence more lend,  
And the moke will ascend,’  
Yet no more is recorded of Conkey.”

The effect of this intrusion of a disjointed impertinence, or irrelevancy, is undeniably grotesque.

We have no clue to the authorship of this singular collection, beyond the very vague hint conveyed in the closing stanza :—

“There was a dear friend of the Kirk,  
Who, released for a time from his work,  
His leisure beguiling,  
These tributes compiling,  
Deserves the best thanks of the Kirk.”

The Kirk has many dear friends, but we question if the present offering will be so acceptable to her as to enable her to decide at once who is the kindly benefactor; or, if he is identified, to induce her to appoint him her poet-laureate. Perhaps his obviously musical ear and poetical temperament might



be held to qualify him for the post of precentor to the General Assembly, an election to which by the members and "adherents" of that venerable body, would no doubt more than reward him for his literary labours in its behalf.

---

I cannot resist the inclination to insert here the following lines, written in a young lady's album, and which seem to me a favourable illustration of the graceful facility of my friend's pen in rhyme.

"A little Ladye asked a Priest,  
Of aspect worn and visage creased,  
Asked him in tone as light and gay  
As trill of lark, or plume of jay,  
To write upon her gilded page  
Some record of his pilgrimage,—  
Some lore of old experience taught,  
Some maxim with time's wisdom fraught,  
Some memory of the fading years,  
Some tale of human loves, hopes, fears :  
'Something,' she cried, 'whate'er it be,  
Good Father, prithee, write for me.'  
'My gentle child,' the Priest replied,  
And as he spake he paused and sighed—  
'My gentle child, thy maiden grace  
Might well move poet's pen to trace,  
In fancy rapt, his brightest line  
To win a smile from eyes like thine.

But I—ah me ! the days are gone  
When mirth and music round me shone ;  
When time was young and hope was high,  
And life was blithe as minstrelsy.  
Thoughts sad as dull funereal chimes  
Would ill beseem the dancing rhymes  
That suit thy fresh and cloudless youth,  
Which knows no grief and doubts no truth.  
Nay, little Ladye, ask no more ;  
My days for weaving songs are o'er.'  
But still the little Ladye's eye  
Was turned towards him pleadingly,  
And still her voice's dulcet tune  
In liquid accents sought the boon.  
'My child,' again replied the Priest,  
Of aspect worn and visage creased,  
'Twere vain to bid the splintered tree  
Again wave greenly o'er the lea ;  
'Twere vain to nurse a quenched fire ;  
'Twere vain to strike a broken lyre ;  
To seek amid the winter's snow  
The April flowers of long ago.  
The spring, my child, that blooms for thee,  
My darkened eyes shall never see.  
The music of thy fairy prime  
For me, ah, never more shall chime !  
A song for thee I cannot sing :  
No gift have I worth offering.  
Nay, rather, let me crave from thee  
More than thou cravest, dear, from me ;—

Leave me the memory of thy smile,  
To light for me the lonely aisle ;  
Leave me the brightness of thy face,  
For sunshine in the shady place ;  
Leave me the echo of thy tone,  
To speak to me when still and lone :  
And as thou goest, with thee go  
The peace of God.' Then sad and low  
The aged father's voice declined,  
Like hollow moan of wintry wind ;  
And murmuring faint, 'No more—no more,'  
He turned him to the cloister door,  
And stepped within, and passed away  
Among the arches cold and grey.  
The little Ladye mused a space,  
With downcast eye and thoughtful face ;  
And then she smiled a tender smile,  
And slowly left the ancient pile—  
For some one whispered in her breast,  
'Thou dost not go away unblest.'"

These lines were sent to me by the young lady—now married and the mother of a small family—for whom they were written, she having heard that I was editing some of my friend's papers. "I should like to think," she wrote, "that what he wrote for me so kindly, had a place in your memorial. Can you find a corner for the verses? Dr Peerie was one of my best and truest friends. He taught me all that I know that is most worth knowing, and led me to

just opinions and principles with a firm and yet always a gentle hand. I, and many others of the young people who were brought under his influence, can never forget him, or cease to be grateful for all we owe him." This is a touching testimony, and one that has been amply corroborated.

Probably most readers of this volume are already acquainted with the leading facts of my late friend's life; but for the information of such as may not possess this knowledge, I may be excused if I give a brief outline of his biography.

Moses Peerie was his parents' only child, and was born at the paternal farm of Peeriewinkle, on the 1st of April 1830. The family was an old and respectable one; and this its latest scion—for Moses never married, and the line closed in him—used to say that its origin was so remote and legendary, that he believed it could be traced back even beyond the Peri, who,

"at the gate  
Of Eden stood, disconsolate,"

at a period anterior to historical record. Moses was educated for the Church, his father having arranged with Lord Linkumoddie, the patron of the united parishes of Benstaggars and Glenstodgie, within which the little property of Peeriewinkle lay, that his son should be presented to the living, at the first vacancy after his being "licensed." His career at college was distinguished; and having passed his "trials" before

the Presbytery of Brightbogle, he was licensed in May 1852, in which month, by a providential coincidence, the incumbent of the united parishes died, after a short illness, which followed a dinner at Linkumdoddie Castle. Moses was at once appointed, and warmly welcomed to what might be called his native pulpit. A few ill-set Dissenters tried to get up a cry of "high-handed patronage," and even circulated a scandalous story about a pecuniary consideration paid by old Peerie to Lord Linkumdoddie, who was little better than bankrupt; but nothing came of these malignant efforts. Moses made a model parish minister,—preached, prayed, visited, taught, "allured to brighter worlds and led the way," like an apostle. "What a fuss they make nowadays about their 'Christian Life and Work'!" he once remarked to me, after reading the report of the Committee of that ilk. "Why, I was Christianly living and working in my old parish here, up to the full extent of all their newest methods, before their convener was breeched, and thought nothing of it, all the time;—bah!" He had his church in admirable order,—an excellent choir, a sensible session, a large Sunday-school, and a well-selected parish library. The church was always crowded; and his sermons—plain, practical, often very touching in their sympathy, and insight, and homely eloquence—bore good fruits in the lives of an honest and orderly population.

His life was uneventful. Give him his books, a

friend's visit now and then, and a daily well-matured Havana cigar, and he said he could afford to leave society, and church courts, and all the hubbub and fantasia of Vanity Fair, to those who loved, as he did not, the world, the flesh, and the devil. His friends were chiefly found among what I may call the liberal, or moderate, party in the church. "I love elbow-room and free development," he used to say; "and I can get nothing but compression and narrowness, and rules and regulations, among this new evangelical lot. They have no notion either of the beauty of holiness, or of the liberty of God's children. I prefer the ancient ways of culture, charity, and peace."

His civil politics were also liberal, though latterly he felt he had more in common with a moderate Conservative than with a Gladstonian. "There are no sound Liberals of the old sort now," he would say; "men who know and love the free principles of the British Constitution. There is too much worship of one man—too little reverence for reverend traditions and institutions. As for a Scotch radical, he is the most narrow-minded dog alive." Moses was always outspoken, and sometimes his language was thought harsh by those who did not understand the real warmth of his heart and sweetness of his temper; but he never wounded willingly: and his parishioners, among whom he spent his days, and who knew him best, would often say of him, "The minister's whiles

a wee thocht plain in his speech; but what for no? He never gies a rough word, except where it's needed, and he has aye a kind ane for the puir bodie."

He contributed occasionally to the periodicals; but under a *nom de plume*, which I feel bound to conceal, as he expressed a wish to that effect. In the year 1876 he received the degree of D.D. from his university, having won it, according to the rules of that learned body, by the composition of a theological thesis. I have good reason to believe that it was the unanimous opinion of the theological faculty, that no more suggestive and erudite treatise had ever been laid before them than Dr Peerie's paper, on "David's Dancing; or, The Hebrew Fling."

In the autumn of last year a bad fever broke out in his parish. "The Local Imbecility," he wrote to me at the time, "have at last gained the reward for which they have been long competing. Dirtier middens, fouler drains, crowder cottages, are not to be found in the county, than those they have fostered at the new distillery in the glen; and a smarter fever than is laying its hands on them now has not been known for a century." He was unwearied in his tending of the sick; and after three weeks' exposure to infection, took the fever himself severely. It carried him off in a week. When the people knew that he was gone, there was not a dry eye in the united parishes. Hundreds followed him to his grave, in the old aisle of the ruined church in

Glenstodgie, where he rests beside his predecessors, who have been buried there for the last seven hundred years. A plain granite cross surmounts his tomb, and bears the simple inscription—

MOSES PEERIE, D.D.,  
MINISTER OF THE UNITED PARISHES  
• FROM 1852 to 1882.

J. G.

THE BALMS, *December* 1883.



## DRAMATIC FRAGMENTS



## I.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY.

This fragment, like most of Dr Peerie's literary remains, bears no date. It obviously refers, however, to the period when the General Assembly, during several sessions, was much occupied with the affairs of Dr Robert Lee. Dr Peerie had a thorough admiration for Dr Lee. "He is the man for the time," he used to say. "After he is gone, people will begin to understand that a prophet hath been among them."

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

The Rev. SAUNDERS M'PHUN of Blethershiels.

The Rev. Dr PERIWINKLE of Mal-Accord.

The Rev. YOUNGER HUMMING of Screwington.

The Rev. Dr NIBLICK of the Laigh Kirk.

The Rev. Dr DANDOLO of St Sathanas.

Field-Marshal TOBIAS MACFLUMMERY PEDDLINGTON.

Mr DUNCAN DIBBLE.

Mr HOOK-CROOK, the Public Prater.

SCENE—*The "Rainbow" Hostelry.*

*Enter M'PHUN (singing).*

There's nae luck about the hoose,

There's nae luck ava ;

There's little pleasure in the hoose

When Saunders Mac's awa'.

There's nane wi' sic a start can spring,  
 Rampaging to the floor;  
 There's nane frae sic a leathern throat  
 Can gie sae lood a roar.

Dr PERIWINKLE (*entering behind*).

What, ho! my merry Saunders, dost thou sing?  
 Or is't a tuneful bullfinch that I hear  
 Descant thy praise, my henchman?

M'Phun. Truly, fair Doctor, 'twas my voice you heard.  
 I did but wed new words to an old tune;  
 And, lo! ere I was conscious, they became  
 A kind of eulogy of my poor self.  
 Excuse thy Saunders.

Periwinkle. For the tune I may.  
 'Twas *old*, thou saidst; but an ye wed new words  
 To ancient airs it is a perilous game,  
 And smells of Inno——

M'Phun (*interrupting wildly*). No, no, never! no.  
 Oh, name it not!—to me—of Blethershiels  
 The light—the champion. I know thy mind.  
 “Vation,” thou wouldst have added; let the name  
 Remain unnamed between us.

Peri. Well, well, well!  
 There's worse names after all; but 'twill not do  
 To say so. Here they come—the whole jingbang.

*Enter* HUMMING, NIBLICK, DANDOLO, PEDDLINGTON,  
 DIBBLE, and HOOK-CROOK.

Dibble. Oh, good even, Doctor!—How are you, Doctor?  
 And Mr M'Phun!—how's a' at Blethershiels?

It's really pleasant to be here again,  
On the great annual occasion, sir.  
Upon my word, I feel it solemnising :  
I think I'll just be ordering in the tumblers.

*Humming.* O Dibble, Dibble! I have often thought—  
Although the thought hath grieved me—that you are  
Too—shall I call it—*carnal*, friend ; at least  
Too careful of your belly. Here am I—  
Upon whose all too narrow shoulders rests  
The care of all the Churches, from the shores  
Of storm-beat Whalsay to sun-smitten Ind—  
A humble man, but not without my use ;  
But what to me (albeit, I labour sore)  
Is that base organ of our sinful frame ?  
'Tis but a bag——

*Peri.* Bag here, bag there, good friend,  
The night is cold for May, and I think Dibble  
A very sensible fellow. Bring the liquor.

*Exit DIBBLE, returning with tumblers, whisky, &c. They  
all sit in, and drink for a time in silence.*

*Dandolo.* Sure, one is wanting whom we ought to have  
Where is M'Tattle of the Dragon Kirk ?

*Niblick.* He holds to-night a private conversation  
With one or two suspected heretics—  
Base Innovators—foul and perjured thieves,  
Who pouch the Church's pay—mean miscreants—  
And serve themselves, not her.

*Dan.* Niblick, my son,  
Is not your language harsh ? True, I have thought

And I have said, that only Satan could  
Inspire such doctrine and such policy  
As mark these enemies of righteousness ;  
But still we must remember charity ;  
And though we damn, do it reluctantly.  
I thought, my son, you cursed with too much zest.

*Peri.* Oh, zest be boiled ! why should not Niblick curse ?  
'Tis all he's good for. Nay, my zealous friend,  
Restrain your choler, I but spoke in jest :  
But I would ask—(another mutchkin, Dibble)—  
Our learned friend the Prater, who knows well  
The law—if not the Gospel—what's the line  
That we must take with these same heretics ;  
For cursing simply will not do, I fear.

*Hum.* Oh, my dear brothers ! let us pray for them ;  
I feel the burden of their poor lost souls.  
With much to do and suffer for the Church—  
*This* still oppresses me.

*Peddlington.* I'll join you, Humming :  
I quite agree with you. I always thought  
Your little book about impromptu prayers  
The best book of this godless century.  
Nature, who made me in a freak, forbade  
That I should own a mind ; but I have yours  
To lean on. Oh, my Humming ! let us pray.

*Hook-Crook.* I rise to order. Sirs, I apprehend  
Devotional exercises are not just now  
Before the House. A reference was made  
To me as Public Prater. I am paid  
To fill the Prater's office ; yet I give

My best opinions gratis, for I think  
I owe the Church so much. My gown and wig  
Are worth the salary, but my mind's my own.  
The Reverend Doctor from the genial south  
Has asked what line has to be taken with  
Those foes of righteousness and moderate peace,  
Who now for ten long years have doggedly  
Defied the Church and me—impeached my law,  
And set at nought my counsel. And I say  
A line as hard as iron must be ta'en.  
I am not clear—(I never in my life  
Indeed was clear)—as to the legal question.  
We're all friends here—

*Dibble.*

Hear, hear !

*H.-C.*

And so I may

Impart to you, in private, that they have  
The law upon their side ; but what of that ?  
Bluster and brag and brazen-browed defiance  
Have often stood us in good stead before ;  
And now—

*Peri.* Remember *Walpole*.

*H.-C.*


Now, I say,

I beg the Doctor will not interrupt ;  
And now our tactics still shall clear the field.  
They're bringing up their forces. Let them come !  
The arch-heresiarch himself, and all  
His peers and satellites—the traitor who  
Scoffed at the sacred formula prepared  
By hands infallible within the hall,  
'Yclept Jerusalem at Westminster :

The scorner who ran tilt like wrathful bull  
At Moses and his law ;—and every dolt  
Who follows their blind leading, let them come ;—  
And watch me then defy them !—Zanies says  
The Public Prater should be calm and cool ;—  
My faith ! they little know me if they deem  
Calmness or coolness or judicial mind  
Had ever covert underneath my wig.  
Ha ! you shall hear me bellow—like the bulls  
That David met in Bashan. You shall see  
How I shall bang the table till the books  
Are purged from all the years' accruing dust ;  
Though when I smash the table till it dirls,  
And send a thrill through every traitor's breast,  
I never feel a nerve disquieted  
Through all my veteran digits. Yes, my friends !  
These are our tactics, now as in the days  
When we won other battles. Law be blown !  
Let charity and all that bosh go hang !  
By brassy boldness—by obstreperous voice—  
By loud appeal to every prejudice—  
By steady blinking of the question, and  
By every art of deft conservatism—  
We must preserve the *status quo*, and put  
A stern extinguisher on Innovation.

*Omnes.* Hurrah ! hurrah ! The Public Prater speaks.  
Hark to the Public Prater ! Hip ! hurrah !

*Peri.* And yet, my masters, I have some misgivings.  
They say the feeling spreads that we are wrong,  
And that the others—what's their name ?—are right.





I'm not a persecutor. Saunders is.

I'd almost like to be done with't if I could.

*M'Phun.* Is it great Periwinkle that I hear?

Dost speak of yielding? Oh, my dear, dear Doctor!

I—thy poor Saunders—would implore of thee

Be firm. Stick to a side. Which, is all one

To me, if only you will stick to it;

And see that it is popular. I depend

On doing much through popularity.

I cannot lead, but I can follow well,

And snarl at heels of enemies: but, I pray,

Give me a line that I can see and follow:

Don't waver, dearest Doctor.

*Hum.*

I again

Feel in my bowels it is not in us

Our footsteps to direct: and I would fain—

As we have had ten tumblers—now go hence

While it is night, still to do some small work

For the dear Church—that so my right hand may

Be ignorant of what my left performs:

And *vice versa*. Shall we close with prayer?

*Dan.* My soul is much encouraged by the word

Our wise Hook-Crook hath spoken; yea, I feel

We need no more, else, Humming, I at once

Had seconded your motion. Dibble, come—

Lend me your arm. True Saunders, fare ye well.

*Dib.* Come away, Doctor: a blithe night, on my word,

An improving occasion, sir. On the morrow

We'll smite the Ammonites, as Screech would say,

Hip and thigh, sir.

[*Exeunt DANDOLO and DIBBLE.*]

*Peri.* Saunders, come home with me ;  
You are not quite so tuneful as you were :  
I'll sing you a new song, the air's my own :—

[*Exit singing.*

When the hoose is rinnin' roond aboot

It's surely time to flit ;

We aye ha'e ta'en the turn in time,

And sae we shall dae yet.

[*Manent* NIBLICK, PEDDLINGTON, HOOK-  
CROOK, and HUMMING, *bibentes.*

## II.

## THE NIGHT BEFORE THE ASSEMBLY.

This is of a later date than the previous fragment, and its theme is evidently the institution of the Baird Trust, which Dr Peerie regarded with much suspicion, although he never joined in any public discussion of its policy and propriety, and always did justice to its founder's motives.

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SAINT JEEMS, of Cambusdiddle, a Patron Saint, and the Prophet and High Priest of Mammon, the God of the Island.

BALDYKIN and M'TURK, two Levites, the henchmen of Saint Jeems.

QUITLAW, his principal doer, or mystery-man.

LUSTORULE, GREEDYBAGS, TATTLEKIN, HOWKINMIRK, BLANKOBRAIN,

BRATOGRACE, Spirits of the Pit, attending on Saint Jeems.

THE FAMILY, odd men, kept by SAINT JEEMS.

SCENE—*A low Chamber in an Iron-mine in the Island of Philargyria.*

*Enter BALDYKIN and M'TURK.*

M'TURK.

Why stays the master? 'Tis a naughty place  
To make one's way to—through a deal of muck;  
And to be kept awaiting is a shame.

BALDYKIN.

Dost never keep the lean licentiate—  
The missioner a-trembling for his dole,  
Waiting the leisure of the proud M'Turk,

In dingy corridors of XXII?  
 Perchance thou reapest, friend, as thou dost sow.  
 But be content. To grumble were as vain  
 As for King Onut to countermand the tide.  
 If we would sack the master's money, we  
 Must wait the master's pleasure; with the sweet  
 Must chew the bitter, and repress grimace.  
 He'll come anon. To-night he counsel takes  
 With Quitlaw, who, men do aver, rules him  
 As he rules you and me. 'Tis hard to get  
 Quite to the bottom of the pit wherein  
 We have ta'en service; but the pay is good.

M'TURK.

Yea, verily: and the gold conferreth power;  
 Power to do good in divers useful ways,  
 E'en though the way be sometimes hard to tread.

*Enter the Spirits of the Pit:* LUSTORULE, GREEDYBAGS,  
 TATTLEKIN, HOWKINMIRK, BLANKOBRAIN, BRATO-  
 GRACE.

*Chorus.*

Back, clumsy mortal—  
 Back from the portal—  
 Back and be dumb.  
 Down on your marrow-bones—  
 Down on the ironstones—  
 Down, ere he come.  
 Hark! from the sooty shaft  
 Groans of the windlass waft,—  
 Dart ruddy gleams:

Shout till your breath be scant,  
Hail your hierophant,  
Mighty Saint Jeems !

*Enter SAINT JEEMS, of Cambusdiddle, clothed in archiepiscopal robes, wearing a blacksmith's apron and carrying in his right hand a small iron pickaxe. He is preceded by two mutes with staves of pig-iron, and followed by QUITLAW, who carries on a japanned tea-tray the "Carritch," and by THE FAMILY, in procession, with bags of gold. M'TURK and BALDYKIN prostrate themselves.*

SAINT JEEMS.

Get up ye deev—— I mean, arise, my friends,  
Be seated on this lump of hematite ;  
A goodly metal and a rich, although,  
Like you, my stout M'Turk, 'tis better far  
Than bonny.

M'TURK.

Ha-ha ! Good ! Oh, excellent !  
A pleasant jest. (*Aside*) A scurvy ribaldry.

SAINT JEEMS.

Well, let's to business ; and the while I speak  
Hold you your tongues, and mark ye well my rede.  
Quitlaw and I have talked the matter o'er ;  
And what we settle is the law for you.  
The Levites meet to-morrow : you'll be there—  
In their Assembly ; and each day they meet

In solemn conclave, and in free—ho ! ho !—  
Come, I'm not joking—and in free debate,—  
I charge ye sit from early morn till eve—  
From eve till midnight wraps their hall in gloom,  
And fills it with the steams of alcohol.  
Have all my slaves in hand ; and as they love  
Their supplemented stipends, at your nod  
See that they hiss the heretics, and stamp  
The latitudin—— What d'ye call the wretch,  
The lover of the broad destructive way ?  
*Him* they stamp out with universal heel,  
If ever he makes bold to vent his breath  
In pestilent blasts of shameless unbelief.  
All innovators must be gouged and choked ;  
All that dare think, and speak their thought, must do't  
Inaudible amidst a general bray.  
If ever any ope his mouth to plead  
For what some miscreants call their "liberty,"  
Be ready with the "Carritch" ; stuff it down  
His gullet to the root, and bash his head  
With the "Confession,"—that will do for *him*.  
If any seem to swither, and to stand  
Dividing the slow mind, as though in doubt  
Whether to do your hest, or hold aloof,  
Or join the infidel, the graceless crew,  
Who claim the Levites' title, and to be  
The wardens of the Temple, faithful still  
To old traditions of her rule and creed,  
And dare to differ yet from me, Saint Jeems,—  
Them, gently drawing to some coign obscure,

And there unbarring to their furtive eye  
The glitter of your gold, tickle their palms  
With plumpest shekels,—they will cease to doubt.

Ye, day by day, must send reports to me  
Of all that's mooted :—and I dare ye vote  
Save as I warrant ! Ye are not your own,  
For I have bought ye ; and I mean—through you—  
To buy the Levite tribe,—all, man and boy—  
And make the slag-like remnant, that reject  
My offered terms, glad to fly otherwheres  
Out of the reach of my malevolence ;—  
For, where my will is done, I bless and pay ;  
But where resisted, I shall curse and ban,  
And persecute and plague, until the wretch,  
Obnoxious to my rage, will shriek, “ Forbear !  
O mighty Jeems ! be merciful—fear ! ”

M'TURK *and* BALDYKIN.

An oracle hath spoken. Holy Jeems !  
O goodly master !

SAINT JEEMS.

Peace ! I've more to say.  
Ye shall rehearse me amply what ye do.  
The Spirits of the Pit shall wait on you  
To fetch and carry 'twixt us. You, M'Turk,  
Shall Greedybags and Lustorule attend—  
Fine spirits that know me, and will serve you well.  
Around my Baldykin—invisible—  
Shall Howkinmirk and Tattlekin—deft pair—  
On nimble pinion flutter. Blankobrain

And Bratograce shall poise above the table  
In your Assembly with an airy wallet,  
Wherein to carry any odds and ends  
That ought to come before me :—Overtures  
For union with the Philistines ; or plans  
For kidnapping the Moabitish shepherds ; or  
Models of traps for catching wandering sheep  
From uplands of the Edomite ; or snares  
To trip the kine of Bashan ; or the drafts  
Of acts against coarse swearing, or the use  
Of broad-wheeled waggons in Jerusalem  
Upon the Sabbath-day ; or crafty schemes  
Of policy by Periwinkle cute ;  
Or maps of territories drawn by Smiff ;  
Or pious pastorals, or ancient saws,  
By good Lord Colewort and the Earl of Thrums ;  
Or sums by Humming :—all such floating gear  
Shall ye despatch me. Have ye understood ?

M'TURK *and* BALDYKIN.

Yea, holy Jeems ; we understand your will,  
And we shall do it.

QUITLAW.

Faith, you're safest so.  
Do it—I trow. By Mammon, why, ye *must*,  
And *shall*, to the very letter.

M'TURK *and* BALDYKIN.

We are yours,  
Body and soul, to do your high behest.



## SAINT JEEMS.

Enough! Ye understand me. Ye may trudge.

[*To the FAMILY.*

Give them a bag between them. Hoist them up.

[*Exeunt M<sup>r</sup>TURK and BALDYKIN  
with bag of gold.*

Good faith, they serve my purpose, but they are  
Two barren rascals,—and the night is close,—  
And I am, with much talk, as dry as dust.  
Bring me my goblet; and sit in, my friends.

## QUITLAW.

We'll drink confusion to our enemies—  
And triumph to the Territorial cause—  
The Levites' subjugation—and the rule  
Of Mammon, and his chief apostle, Jeems.

## THE FAMILY.

The reign of Mammon, and the great Saint Jeems!

*Chorus of Spirits.*

O mighty Mammon!  
All else is gammon;  
Thou art alone  
He whom thy slaves adore,—  
Thou sittest evermore  
Proud on thy throne.  
Raise loud the pealing hymn—  
Sound through these arches dim  
Sackbut and fiddle.

Dulcimer, cornet, flute,  
Let not a chord be mute,—  
Sound, till the joyous toot  
    Reach Cambusdiddle.  
Ring through the caverns low,  
Ring where the night-fires glow  
    O'er lurid streams ;  
Where in the pitchy fen—  
'Grimed past all human ken—  
Day and night boys and men  
    Toil for Saint Jeems——

## SAINT JEEMS.

Oh, drat your noise ! Be silent. To the hall  
Where Levites congregate. Be ready there  
Against the morrow. Hence, ye sooty knaves !

*[Exeunt the Spirits of the Pit—manent  
cæteri bibentes.]*

## III.

## THE DISCOMFITED CONSPIRATORS.

The "Discomfited Conspirators" is of recent origin, and must have been about the last of Dr Peerie's playful compositions. It is plainly suggested by the Liberation Society's Disestablishment Campaign, of which he strongly disapproved: "Not," he said, "because I am a Churchman, but because I am a Scotchman; not because I am a Conservative, but because I am a Liberal. The Church is not what it ought to be, no doubt; but, after all, it is the most really national and liberal institution we have left us in poor old Scotland nowadays."

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PLUVIOSE, an artful dodger.

GIRNS, a dominie.

MUTTON, an arithmetician.

PUDDLEDICK, a politician.

TYLER NIGGLES, a lawyer.

ROSEMARY, a young noble.

SCENE—*A Tavern.*

*Tyler Niggles.* I've wiped the table and arranged the  
chairs,

And bidden Dorcas, when I strike the bell,  
To bring the liquor and the oysters in.  
The bivalves are expensive, but I know



Of Pennsylvania (fur of skunk, you know,  
Lining black drugget), nought succeeds like this.  
It mystifies the Templars, and persuades  
The pliant public——

*T. Nig.*                                'Twill not do so long,  
I rather think, good Mutton. Once found out,  
That game ain't worth the candle. But here come  
Pluiose and Girns. I shall strike the bell,  
And we will season talk with food and drink.

[*Enter PLUIOSE and GIRNS.*]

Welcome, gentlemen.

*Pluiose.*                                Oh, bother, but I'm dry—  
Dry as a dusty road in midsummer ;  
I've talked three hours among these Celtic stots ;  
I've argued, phrased, prayed, preached—but all in vain.  
Each Highland cateran, droning in reply,  
Would speak of nought but "Principle," and "Claim  
Of Right," and "National Faith," and "Covenant,"  
And "Protest" anti-Papal, and a string  
Of jargon, to which Bug's distraughtest speech  
Is temperate reasoning. Bah ! it makes me sick.  
Was it for this I immolated Smiff ?—  
For this I slipped the union, like a thread  
Unknotted, from my hand ? A drink, I say !  
I'm dry and dusty, and sick at heart, and cold—  
Cold as the country which but cuts its jokes  
At my great enterprise.—Aroint it all !  
Nay, Girns, I'll not be chidden—I am wroth.

*Girns.* Dear brother, be your own eupeptic self.  
Not in a day was Rome erected, nor

Within that period Carthage overthrown.

*Plu.* Carthage be hanged ! I may be Scipio,  
But have not Rome to back me ; no one cares  
A copper for our labours. Carthage stands,  
And grows, and flourishes, waxes fat and kicks,  
And grins upon our travail.

*Girns.* Yet the day  
Will come, I feel assurance, O my friends !  
When our long faith and patience will prevail,  
Yea, and the love wherewith we love the souls  
Of those with whom we strive ; for I maintain  
We love them—do we not ?

*Mut.* Oh ! of course, dearly.

*Girns.* There are precious souls among them ; and I  
yearn

Upon them, as the bowels of Joseph yearned  
Upon his brethren, though they knew him not,  
And thought him but a crusty customer.  
I love the Templars, though they possibly  
Incline not to believe it ; and in love  
Would oust them from the Temple, and would take  
Their gold and silver, lands and tenements,  
And carnal gear of every sort, and give  
The proceeds to some gentle charity ;—  
To infant schools, or homes for imbeciles,  
Or seminaries of the orthodox,  
Or purchase of American degrees  
For slighted scholars, or annuities  
For aged Voluntaries of pure report—  
But all in love and tender brotherhood.

*Plu.* Oh, dash it all! Keep havers such as those,  
Girns, for the platform. Waste them not on us,  
Who know your hand. In fact, the game is up,  
Unless you hold some likelier card than this.  
Niggles, what say you?

*T. Nig.* I have always held  
Pan-Presbyterian principle combined  
With theocratic optimism, in a blend  
Of spiritual independence, in the play  
Of moral consciousness and national will,  
Acting upon the outward circumstance  
Of Templar Stablishment—

*Mut.* Lord help us all!  
What hash is this? Is't an old article;  
Or plea at bar; or doting driveller's dream?  
Here's Puddledick, thank goodness—let us see  
[Enter PUDDLEDICK.]

If he can speak plain English. Do you mean  
To move your motion, Puddledick, or no?  
Is there a stroke in you at all, or, like  
The rest, are you disheartened and unstrung?

*Puddledick.* I do not say disheartened nor unstrung,  
But baffled, I admit. Do what I will,  
No one will hearken. No one cares a—well,  
A jot or tittle, for my motion, nor  
For me. Merrybrick himself, he who erst  
Cajoled us and beguiled, now scowls askance;  
Nay, yesternight, when I, in mild appeal,  
Prayed—"Master! listen; give me time to speak;  
Let me expound unto thy satellites

The Temple and its curse,"—turned sharp on me—  
 "Avaunt, Mass John! Have I not coils enough  
 About my path that thou must cumber me  
 With Temples and their curses? Hence! I say."  
 And Colin Oig was there, and sniggered low;  
 And the Solicitor said, "Serve thee right;"  
 And many a brawny Englishman looked round  
 With brow so low'ring that, in fact, I fled,  
 And so am here.

*Enter ROSEMARY.*

*Rosemary.* And so am I, fair sirs.

How goes it?

*Plu.* Excellently well, my Lord.

*Girns.* God save your noble worship.

*T. Nig.* Good, my Lord,

You make a sunshine——

*Rose.* In a shady place?

Hay? Come now, let's be frank. Your little game,  
 My reverend friends, is, for the present, played.  
 I thought, and so did wiser men than I,  
 That you'd have played it better, and that more  
 Would join and take a hand. We find they wont,  
 So we decline to hold the stakes. D'ye see?  
 The Temple may be good or bad—for us;  
 We reck but little; but 'tis very plain  
 The People—masters of us all—believe  
 'Tis a deal better than 'tis called, nor wish  
 To see it undermined or overthrown.  
 And therefore, sirs, I counsel ye, as friends,  
 Leave it alone, nor by your envious spite



'Gainst it, excite the people 'gainst yourselves.  
MUTTON, you vulgarise the whole affair  
With false statistics and with evil names.  
GIRNS, you're too gushing to be quite sincere ;  
NIGGLES, a meddling lawyer's law becomes  
Suspected of his patrons. PUDDLEDICK,  
Among the Commons you are deemed a bore.  
PLUVIOSE, all faults the champion of a cause  
Should shun most heedfully combine in you.  
Excuse my candour ; but 'tis necessary,  
Ye understand, that further partnership  
With any of you, in this ill-planned crusade,  
Is not for me or those with whom I deal.  
So fare ye well.

[*Exit* ROSEMARY.

*Plu.* Oh stay, my Lord ! a word.

*Girns.* My heart is broken.

*T. Nig.* After him ; oh, nay !

[*Exeunt* NIGGLES and PUDDLEDICK *running*.

*Mut.* Set *him* up, indeed ! brat and coxcomb.

*Girns.* Peace :

Let us pray.



## LYRICAL FRAGMENTS



## I.

## THE BATTLE OF THE CHAIR.

Suggested, presumably, by the contest for the vacant Chair of Biblical Criticism in Edinburgh University, in 1868, when Mr Gathorne Hardy was Home Secretary, and Mr Gordon Lord Advocate.

It was a Chair was vacant,  
 Eke and a deanerie ;  
 And a swarm of hungry ravens  
 Upon the spoil did flee.  
 But a dour carle, a lawyer,  
 Before the booty stood—  
 And by his side a hardy knight—  
 And scanned the dingy brood.  
 “Give place, give place, ye greedy knaves !  
 Make not such eldritch din ;  
 Come one by one, and state your case ;  
 And may I lose our lady’s grace,  
 But the best man shall win.”

Thus spake the hardy knight, and frowned—  
 “Come one by one,” said he :  
 And bold as brass stept NIBLICK forth—  
 That great and good D.D.

"On whom but on myself," he cried,  
"Can you the Chair bestow?  
If learning is to guide your choice,  
What is there I don't know?  
I'm great at Latin, great at Greek;  
At Hebrew greater still:  
Of Sanskrit, Chaldee, Syriac,  
I've more than drunk my fill.  
My temper mild commends itself  
To every candid mind;  
A safer guide, a gentler friend,  
The Student ne'er could find."

"It is not," said a pastoral voice—  
And HUMMING stood revealed—  
"It is not on the treacherous score  
Of any worthless human lore  
That I have ta'en the field.  
Ah! what is learning void of faith,  
Or knowledge stript of grace?  
Who would on godless science  
Bestow this goodly place?  
A man of faith, a man of prayer,  
With unction from on high—  
A man of humble, earnest soul,  
A man of single eye;  
From such an one—if such there be—  
Turn not away your face;  
Small and despised he may be, yet  
Heaven marks him for the place."

He said and sighed. With ponderous pomp  
M'TATTLE cleared his throat,  
And laboured to begin the speech  
Which he had got by rote.  
But as he laboured ; forward shoved  
By pressure in the rear,  
Young CHITTERLING attained the front,  
And PHUNKY cried "Hear, hear!"  
"I am the wondrous Chitterling,  
The Phoenix of the West ;  
Without a rival anywhere,  
Say they who know me best.  
I'm the Parson of the Period,  
A heavy Author too ;  
A wonderful Committee-man,  
A Churchman sound and true ;  
No restless innovator  
The brethren's souls to chafe ;  
I never risk a step ahead  
Until I'm sure it's safe.  
I've preached before her Majesty,  
And edified was she ;  
I am the friend of PHUNKY,  
Who's to make me a D.D.  
I know my Latin grammar,  
I've chewed my Hebrew roots ;  
I can put on the critic's air  
As easy as old boots.  
I can't say I'm a dab at Greek ;  
My German I forget ;

But with these carnal weapons  
The sceptic can't be met.  
With Verbal Inspiration  
His costard I will score ;  
The Canon and the Catechism  
Will serve if he wants more.  
Why shake the student's opening mind  
With problems deep and queer ?  
Faith is better far than knowledge,  
As toddy beateth beer.  
So let the Chair be mine, fair sirs,  
Eke and the deanerie ;  
And may the blessing of the Church  
Upon ye ever be."

He spake, and all the throng behind  
With PHUNKY hummed applause ;  
And " Let us stick in CHITTERLING,"  
Exclaimed the man of laws.  
But still the hardy knight he frowned—  
And " Wot ye not," quoth he,  
" That not a knave of all the brood  
Deserves the Chair and fee ?  
Which of them all could fill the place  
Where he who's lost, so long  
Spoke wisely, freely, earnestly—  
A teacher clear and strong ?  
Nay, get ye hence ; in Scotland broad  
There must be better men



Of heart and brain to take his place,  
And do his work again.  
Hence, hence, I tell ye"—and he rose  
And waved a threatening arm,  
And backward from his presence shrank  
The lean and angry swarm.  
Back slipped the nimble CHITTERLING,  
And NIBLICK gnashed and swore,  
And HUMMING made as though he prayed,  
And PHUNKY snuffed full sore :  
So out they shuffled, and I saw  
Their ugly mugs no more.

## II.

## APOLOGIA PRO SEDE SUA.

BY A PILLAR OF THE CHURCH.

Beyond the date, 1871, I have no clue to the origin or  
meaning of the above lines.

“WHY is *he* to be Moderator?”  
Is asked by every gibing prater,  
Who thinks to vent his paltry wit  
On the great chair where I shall sit.  
I’ll tell ye why. The very name  
Might teach the merest sump my claim;  
For who should fill the chair of state,  
Except like me, the moderate?  
The smooth, round, gently bulbous noddle,  
Without a bump in’t worth a bodle—  
That is the head the Church prefers  
To crown with yon cocked-hat of hers.  
She does not want the preacher’s arts;  
She cares not for the statesman’s parts;  
She does not seek the scholar’s learning;  
Nor the apostle’s fervour burning.

She chooses mediocrity;  
And this she glorifies in me.

I never fashed with Greek or Latin,  
Though sometimes in a speech comes pat in  
A word or motto from these heathen ;  
Never for any mortal breathing  
Could I recall a line I'd learned  
At college, where no prize I earned.  
E'en when I try to follow Bisset,  
His classic hit, I'm sure to miss it.

I never read about theology,  
Psychology, or somatology ;  
I never dipped in osteology,  
Biology, or anthropology.  
In fact, all ologies are blethers,  
And only help to rive the tethers  
That keep men safe, when storm, alas !  
Threatens to sink the formulas.

I never wrought a hard day's work ;  
I never filled the Dragon Kirk.  
If Cuttlefish had not seceded,  
No doubt ere this they would have needed  
Its crowded area to enlarge,  
But I have saved the town that charge.

Now there are reasons should content  
The few who are dissentient,  
And say I should not have been chosen  
To wear the hat, and coat, and hosen,

Which deck the Moderator's person,  
And which I write this present verse in :  
(I got the loan from Dr Ritchie,  
And find they fit me to a stitchie.)

But if they still protest, oh let  
These noisome brethren not forget  
Election is of grace, not merit.  
And if they think I don't inherit  
The chair august in right of claim  
Which *they* deem valid for the same,  
Then let them note, in my promotion,  
Fresh witness of our Kirk's devotion  
To that great doctrine of election,  
Which, I have heard, finds scant affection  
With some of these same liberal Churchmen,  
Who will be called "left in the lurch men,"  
If they attempt to plant a snare  
Between me and the envied chair.  
I'm not a prophet, but I know  
No gin of theirs will trip my toe,  
But rather, while I mount elate,  
Will level to the floor their pate.

## III.

THE LEITH FISH TEIND AND "SPECKLED  
BIRD."

## A LEGEND OF THE DARK AGES.

Undated, but referring to a sermon of his dear friend the late Dr Wm. Smith, than whom no man more appreciated the humour of Dr Peerie's muse.

---

"Dr Smith's attempt is taking us back to the Dark Ages."—*Bailie Chalmers.*

"It was exceedingly bad taste of Dr Smith to choose the text he had done, as to the other birds pecking at the speckled bird, which he made out to be the Established Church."—*Mr Archibald.*


---

OF fowl and fish a goodly dish  
Was set before the Bailies  
By Dr Smith—that man of pith—  
Whereof this here the tale is:—  
By ancient laws the parson's maw's  
Entitled to be gluttred  
With tithe of all fish, great and small,  
Within the parish gutted.

For many a year the minister  
Had ate, with good digestion,  
His daily dish of tithéd fish,  
And never asked a question ;  
But a day came, the Doctor's wame,  
Was, somehow, sore revolted  
At cod or fluke—whate'er he took  
It wouldna bide when bolted.  
"The fish is foul ;" and with a scowl  
He cried, "I'll stay my hunger  
With stuff like this no more, I wis ;  
I'll tax the best fishmonger.  
From him I'll snatch my daily catch  
Of haddie, fluke, or dory ;  
With fishwife's creel no more I'll deal—  
They'll hear another story.  
The folk believe that I receive  
Enough, if from each boatie  
That comes ashore a tenth—no more—  
Slips down my reverend throatie.  
But law shall stretch till teind I fetch,  
From land no less than water ;  
Shop, cart, and rail shall pay black-mail,  
Or I'll have fines and slaughter."  
He kept his word ; and Leith soon heard,  
With much dissatisfaction,  
That Dr Smith—that man of pith—  
Had raised a legal action,  
The teind to claim of fish that came  
To Leith, howe'er imported ;

Nor fashed his thumb though men looked glum,  
 And Bailies swore and snorted.  
 Then quick was heard the rallying word,  
 That spread like midnight arson,  
 "Ye men of Leith! withstand to death  
 This long and grasping parson."  
 It gathered strength, until at length  
 Man, woman, bairn, and daddy,  
 Bailie and deacon, nought could speak on  
 But Smith and caller haddie.  
 One Sabbath-day, in brave array,  
 The Council all attended  
 (A serious work) the North Leith Kirk;  
 But thither as they wended,  
 From outlook high did Smith espy  
 The Provost, mace, and beadle,  
 With kirk-ward prance; he saw his chance,  
 And, sharp as tailor's needle,  
 "It's them!" he cried, "and I'll be fried,  
 But they shall long remember  
 My chosen text and heads annexed,  
 This Sunday of November!  
 I'll let them know the place they'll go,  
 If they hound on the rabble,  
 To mix my name with evil fame,  
 And for my tithes to squabble."  
 With that he clears the pulpit-stairs,  
 And in a voice of thunder,  
 Grim as a hearse reads out his verse,  
 Then rives the sense asunder;

And shows his flock (let no one mock)  
The ancient Hebrew Prophet  
(The Bailies glower) foresaw the hour,  
Or had an inkling of it,  
When Scottish teind (foul fa' the fiend  
That made the first Dissenter !)  
Of wrath and sorrow in ilka borough  
Would be the painful centre ;  
When pious priests would be the jests  
Of dissidents and scorners,  
And hear, appalled, themselves miscalled  
Like gaberlunzie sorners.  
The Jewish seer—so Smith made clear—  
Foretold the time and banned it ;  
And picture drew of emblem true  
Whereby to understand it.  
The seer averred he saw a bird,  
No longer quite a chicken,  
And droves of daws, with beaks and claws,  
Its speckled plumage picking.  
“The Prophet meant, 'tis easy kent,”  
Says Smith, “by this poor rooster,  
To paint the Church in hapless lurch ;  
And they who scorned and bruised her  
Their emblem find in these unkind  
Jackdaws who peck its feathers—  
Just type of Frees and snell U.P.'s,  
Chock-full of spite and blethers.”  
Thus Smith discoursed, the Council forced  
The while to yield attention ;





But angrier men shall ne'er again  
 At kirk sit civic bench on.  
 One-third were Frees, one-third U.P.'s,  
 One third were vague sectarians ;  
 But this poor bird their minds had stirred  
 To rage with ne'er a variance ;  
 And each aloud both swore and vowed,  
 Soon as the Doctor ended,  
 That *that* kirk-door they'd cross no more,  
 Then homewards ireful wended.  
 And since that day, the fishy fray  
 But swells in force and bellow,  
 And Dr Smith—that man of pith—  
 They say, grows lean and yellow ;  
 And ever, as he treads the street,  
 By public voice is heckled—  
 "How goes it with the landward fish,  
 And with the bird that's speckled ?"

## IV.

## THE GOODLY IRONMASTER.

A BALLAD OF THE IRON AGE.

This, like Dramatic Fragment No. II., finds its *motif* in  
the Baird Trust.

THERE was an ironmaster,  
A lord of several pits,  
No man made money faster,  
None scored such lucky hits.  
For him the markets waited,  
Stocks rattled up and down ;  
His were the biggest money-bags  
In all St Mammon's town.

The Levites of Philistia  
Were, mostly, rather poor ;  
The decent men were scant of bread,  
Their water wasn't sure.  
The man of iron's coffers  
They often eyed askance ;  
"Would God," they say, "that of his coin  
We only had a chance !

How many a priestly household  
We'd gladden with its gleam—  
How many altars dedicate—  
How many souls redeem !”  
And round the ironmaster  
They pressed in anxious throng,  
Nor heeded that his mien was rough,  
His language sometimes strong ;  
They praised his “ noble industry ”—  
“ An honour to his race ; ”  
They raised him to the Elders' seat,  
They blessed him to his face.  
Where'er he went their incense  
Was burned before his nose ;  
While daily upward swelling  
His hoarded treasure rose.

“ God's blessing is upon him,”  
The good M'Stotty cries.  
“ His great increase is of the Lord,”  
M'Tattle testifies.  
“ Who said he was a man of wrath ? ”  
Exclaims the bold M'Phun ;  
“ He, certes, is a man of God,  
Who's worth a million pun'.”  
The gentle Humming wiped his eye—  
“ It doth a vessel good  
To see the promise thus fulfilled  
About the righteous' food.”  
“ Yea,” quoth the gracious Chitterling,  
“ And surely if we work

The oracle aright, a share  
Should fall to Holy Kirk."

Cries Baldykin of Greendykes  
"My mates, leave that to me ;  
The way to bleed this Mulciber  
You presently shall see.  
Within his iron noddle  
Ideas there are twain,  
Through dexterous play on these, I trust,  
The money-bags to gain.  
On what he calls the 'Carritch  
His simple faith is pinned ;  
All other theologic lore  
To him is idle wind.  
Then, to his mind, the minister  
Dealing with human souls,  
Is but the mate of him who digs  
At hematite or coals.  
The work of each he reckons  
By what is brought to bank ;  
And if the 'hutch' be empty,  
The pay is also blank.  
Now, let us drill the Levites,  
Carritch alone to preach,  
And to the hue of Carritch  
Their every thought to bleach.  
A band of statisticians  
We also needs must rear,  
Skilled to make smallest data  
Of vastest size appear—

By defftest tabulation  
Establishing the claim  
Of earnest workmen whom their work  
Will never put to shame.  
I'll pledge my floweriest sermon,  
If thus we go to work,  
The ironmaster's coffers  
Will open to the Kirk.  
He'll pay for nought but Carritch,  
And work reported done :  
But that for this he will disburse,  
Is sure as any gun.  
And, hark ye, gentle comrades,  
Perchance to you and me,  
As deacons of the tribe, our friend  
May fling a special fee."

"Ah, caitiff!" roared a stalwart voice,  
"Ah, miserable sneak!  
Stand from my presence, lest I feel  
Constrained thy nose to tweak.  
Wouldst thou betray the altar, knave?  
Wouldst, for a paltry bribe,  
Drag through the mud of iron pits?  
The honour of the tribe?"  
The voice was John of Lothian's,  
A priest of high degree,  
Who ne'er would quit the Temple  
For force, or bribe, or fee;  
Who to the great St Mammon  
Had never incense burned;

Who ever from the Temple gates  
The prying Gentiles spurned,  
And stood a stout old Levite  
By ancient faith and rule,  
And held the wise traditions  
Of his ancestral school.  
“Dar’st thou with glozing words to plot  
For soul-defiling gold,  
And in *my* presence? By my faith  
I judge thee over-bold!  
‘Carritch,’ in sooth, and duty done  
At ironmaster’s nod,  
For so much pelf—how dar’st thou name  
Such tricks to priests of God?  
Forgettest thou the oath was sworn  
At peril of thy soul,  
When first around thy puny trunk  
Was thrown the Levite’s stole,  
And thou before the altar  
Hadst licence given to stand,  
And gott’st an all too lib’ral share  
Of tithes of holy land—  
The oath thou took’st to serve the Kirk,  
And own no lord but one?  
Rash boy, wouldst thou forswear thee  
Before the truthful sun?  
Nay—get thee hence, my Baldykin;  
Go drive thy bairns to school;  
Hence too, thou wondrous Chitterling,  
Go learn a page of Poole;

Hence rubicund M<sup>c</sup>Stotty,  
Nor tarry by thy beer ;  
O Humming ! gentlest shepherd,  
Glide home, and dry thy tear.  
Away to thy Committee,  
Thou all too loud M<sup>c</sup>Phun ;  
Think not the Kirk was institute  
For thee to rule, my son.  
Go tell your honest patron  
We'll sooner want his pay,  
Than even for all his millions  
Our Mother Kirk betray.  
The heart of old Philistia  
Yet beateth leal and sound ;  
And when the voice of Kirk is heard  
Her sons will rally round.  
They'll yield to her their substance  
Without conditions vile—  
To endow her honest Levites,  
To guard her Temple pile ;  
To keep the sacred fuel  
Upon the altar bright,  
The golden vessels clear of stain,  
The holy lamp alight.  
Begone, ye greedy plotters !  
Ye know not what ye do ;  
Ye yet will bless me, in that I  
To Mother Kirk am true.  
While ye for present profit  
Her ancient fame would stain,

And rear St Mammon's altar  
Within her glorious fane.  
Now mark my rede—an' if ye did,  
Ye'd work her fatal woe ;  
Ye'd bare her threshold to the foot  
Of every heathen foe ;  
Ere ye were dead, the Amorite  
Would lay her bulwarks low."

So spake stout John of Lothian,  
And reared his haughty head ;  
And from his angry voice and arm,  
They say the plotters fled.  
And late that night, policemen  
Before a fast-barred door,  
Found them all lying on the stones  
Draggled and weeping sore ;  
While at them from a window,  
The Ironmaster swore.



## V.

## THE FLIGHT OF THE PRESENTEE.

The ancient minster is, no doubt, St Giles', Edinburgh ; and the ballad, presumably, deals with an episode of the proceedings before the Presbytery, during the vacancy which followed the death of Dr Arnot.

THE Presbytery was gathered,  
 MacGrugar filled the chair ;  
 And all the Metropolitans,  
 Those merry men, were there.  
 Stout Phin alone was absent :  
 Men said that day at noon  
 Was trysted for his fitting on  
 Trunk-hose and buckled shoon.  
 MacGrugar spread abroad his hands,  
 And " Let us pray " quoth he :  
 Then having prayed, he straightway called  
 " Now fetch the Presentee."  
 The while he spake, the beadle  
 Stept in, with look of scare ;  
 Saith he, " A small boy brought it,  
 Whiles ye were at the prayer ;  
 He whistles at the door, and craves  
 A shilling for his care :"

This said, he laid a letter  
    Within MacGrugar's hand ;  
Who long the superscription  
    And long the motto scanned.  
"The Scholar's Club," he muttered—  
    "Who thence could write to me?"  
Then, as he oped it, still made cry,  
    "Now fetch the Presentee."  
But as he read the writing,  
    His brow grew black as night,  
While on him the pale presbyters  
    Stared in amaze and fright.  
A moment glared he at them—  
    Then wildly smote his head—  
And with Pan-Presbyterian yell  
    Exclaimed, "The knave has fled."  
Ye could have heard the beating  
    Of every mighty heart—  
Each mother's son among them  
    Got such a rousing start.  
Then up sprang valiant Bauldie,  
    Whom men called The Trustee :  
"Why, we are fifty fighting men,  
    And he one Presentee.  
Gape ye thus each at other ?  
    Up ! and upon his track ;  
Foul shame it were, but ere an hour  
    We catch and bring him back.  
MacGrugar, thou art nimble,  
    And Steenie stout of lung,

And Racer of the Canongate,  
Thy withers are unwrung :  
Upon him, O my masters !  
And if ye hunt him down,  
I wot I ken a certain fund  
Will stand ye each a crown.”  
They paused not : well together  
Forth sped the chosen three,  
While, “ Bring him here, alive or dead,”  
Shrieked elder Mackersée.  
Forth rushed the wild MacGrugar  
And down the hill he hurled,  
Invoking general vengeance  
Upon the Kirk and world :  
So have ye seen the avalanche,  
Adown the horrid steep,  
Plunge on the fated traveller  
With fierce erratic leap.  
Forth charged the stalwart Steenie,  
“ Foul fare my head,” quoth he,  
“ If this hand does not collar  
Yon flying Presentee : ”  
So have ye seen the gallant steer,  
All maddened by the goad,  
Dash its vast catapult of beef  
Along the trembling road.  
Forth shot the man of Canongate—  
Fleet foot, exhaustless wind ;  
A shout of warning rose before,  
An angry cry behind :

So have ye seen the courser  
Whose hoofs devour the way,  
Flash past uproarious myriads  
Upon the Derby Day.  
They gain the Club together,  
As one man in they rush ;  
All at the threshold met them  
A sober lad in plush :  
“ What will ye here, my masters ? ”  
He asked in mild amaze,  
Uncertain that their headlong haste  
Might not be due to craze.  
They fetched their breath to answer,  
“ We seek the Presentee ; ”  
“ Then you’re a day behind the fair,  
I grieve to state,” says he :  
“ ’Tis not ten minutes since he left,  
The Western train to seek ;  
A carpet-bag within his hand,  
A cutty in his cheek.”  
While yet he spake, the trio  
Again were in the street ;  
The howls of the astounded mob  
Pursued their flying feet.  
“ The station, quick ! the station,”  
Was all the word they spake,  
While over brow, and chest, and limb  
The perspiration brake.  
Nay, faint not now, MacGrugar,  
The prize is still to win ;

Come, Steenie, never pant for breath;  
Hold on, man—give not in!  
But still the man of Canongate  
Drew steadily ahead;  
And when the station hove in sight,  
By several lengths he led.  
The snorting engine whistled  
As down the stairs he sprang;  
The porters closed the carriage-doors  
With consentaneous bang.  
“Stop, stop!” he screamed; “thieves! murder!  
I want the Presentee.”  
A placid porter merely said,  
“Beware of *eau de vie*;  
Upon an empty stomach  
It plays the deuce,” quoth he.  
And as the train slid calmly on  
MacGrugar reached the stair,  
And his and Steenie’s bellow  
Rent the bewildered air;  
But none did heed and none could tell  
If he they sought was there.  
Yet men do say one passenger  
Grinned when he heard their shout,  
And put his thumb unto his nose  
And spread his fingers out.—  
And in the ancient minster  
(On this all tales agree)  
A ghostly echo still is heard  
Of “Where’s the Presentee?”

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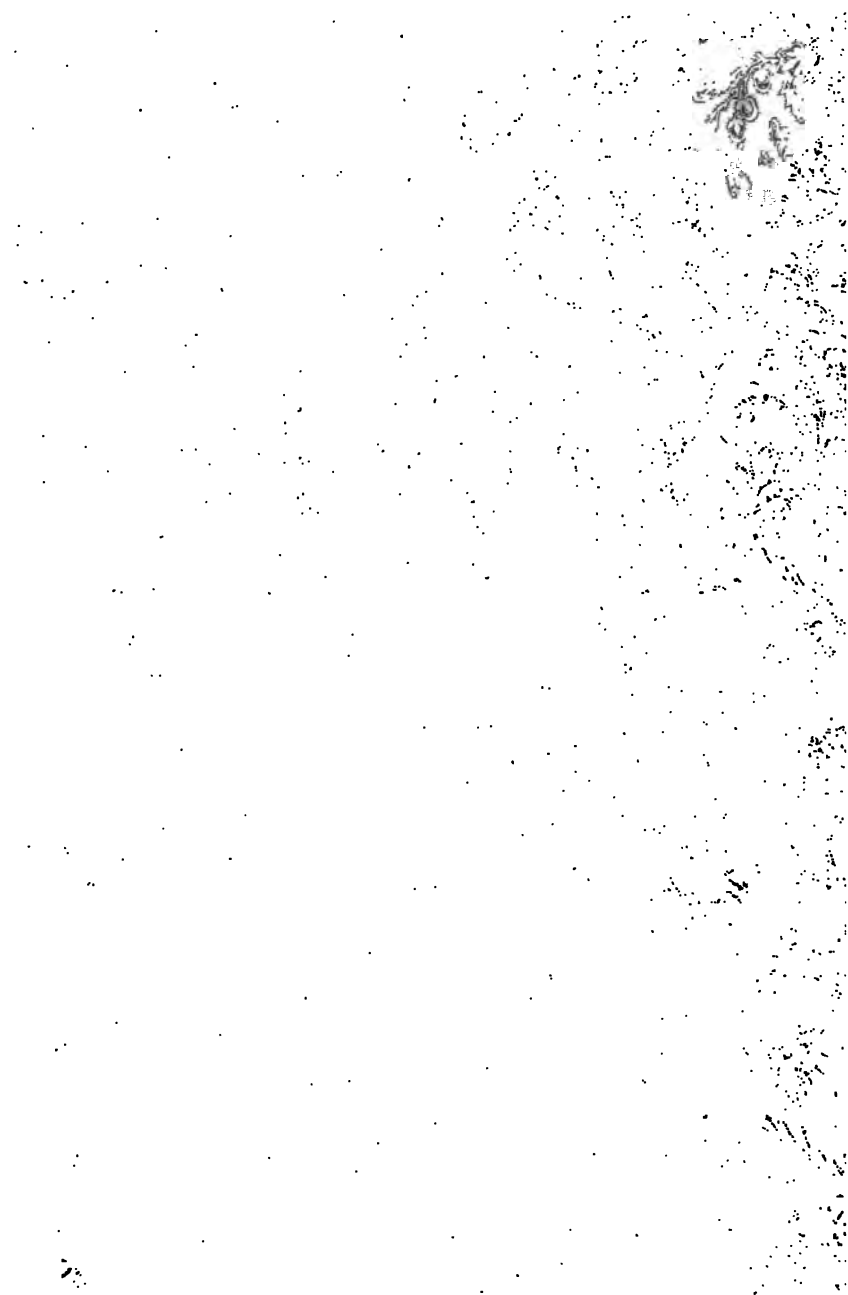
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